

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ORM-02 DHA-02 SCS-03 IO-13

/088 W

-----040805Z 122263 /22

R 040715Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1772

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9629

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, FR, VS

SUBJECT: FRENCH FLIGHTS FROM SAIGON: APRIL 1977

1. DURING MONTH OF APRIL, 623 PERSONS DEPARTED SAIGON ON FRENCH EVACUATION FLIGHTS. BREAKDOWN BY NATIONALITY AS FOLLOWS: 297 FRENCH, 198 VIETNAMESE, 37 CAMBODIANS, 51 CHINESE, 3 LAO, 28 KOREANS, 1 DUTCH, 1 ENGLISH (THE INDIAN CARETAKER OF BRITISH ASSETS IN SAIGON), AND 7 FILIPINOS. FLIGHTS WERE USUALLY ALMOST FULL, ALTHOUGH WITH FEW ABLE-BODIED YOUNG MEN, A NUMBER OF CHINESE CONTINUED ONWARDS TO FRANCE; ALL 11 ON APR 28 FLIGHT WENT TO PARIS.

2. ON BOARD APR 21 FLIGHT WERE MRS. VUONG CHAU (CHINESE) AND DAUGHTER KHIET HINH TRAN (VIETNAMESE NATIONALITY), MOTHER AND SISTER OF AMCIT MRS. HELEN LIEN GAINES. THEY TRAVELLED TO BANGKOK ON LAISSEZ-PASSERS WHICH FRENCH ISSUED AT OUR REQUEST AND ARE UNDERGOING PROCESSING FOR THEIR IMMIGRANT
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VISAS.

3. MISS TRAN NOTED THAT SHE HAS BEEN TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO LEAVE SAIGON FOR TWO YEARS. ALTHOUGH HER ELDERLY CHINESE MOTHER HAD FEW PROBLEMS, A WAY WAS NOT OPEN TO MISS TRAN AS A NATIVE BORN VIETNAMESE UNTIL SHE WAS ABLE TO "ARRANGE" A MARRIAGE WITH A FOREIGNER AND OBTAIN NECES-

SARY DOCUMENTATION AS HIS WIFE AT BEGINNING 1977.

4. THEN BEGAN NUMEROUS VISITS TO IMMIGRATION AND ELSEWHERE, WITH FREQUENT DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS REQUIRED. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PETTY CORRUPTION ONE ENCOUNTERS, THE APPLICATION FORM AT IMMIGRATION COSTS 1,000 OLD PIASTERS. OFFICIALS STATE OPENLY THAT AN APPLICANT MUST PAY THEM AN ADDITIONAL 1,000 PIASTERS, AS WELL, OR HE DOES NOT RECEIVE THE FORM, "SO EVERYONE DOES." ONCE ONE HAS ESTABLISHED A VALID REASON FOR LEAVING, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF BROKERS WHO WILL SERVE AS INTERMEDIARIES FOR BRIBES. OFFICIALS WANT GOLD, IN PARTICULAR; IN HER CASE SHE HAD TO PAY A "CONSIDERABLE" AMOUNT, PERHAPS ONE-HALF OF WHICH WENT TO IMMIGRATION AND THE OTHER HALF TO SAIGON DISTRICT OFFICIALS. GIFTS OF GOODS ALONG THE WAY TO HELPFUL PEOPLE ARE ALSO NECESSARY, SUCH A PROVIDING A MOTORCYCLE--A VERY POPULAR ITEM--TO A LOCAL SECURITY TYPE. MISS TRAN GAVE "MORE THAN ONE" SUCH GIFT; INDEED, SHE AND HER MOTHER ENDED UP WITH ALMOST NOTHING LEFT. THERE IS SAID TO BE A RULE THAT SOMEONE DEPARTING CAN NEITHER SELL NOR GIVE AWAY ANYTHING BEFOREHAND. WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS TRUE, EVERYONE BELIEVES IT. THE SOLDIERS SEIZE EVERYTHING LEFT BEHIND AFTER DEPARTURE, IN ANY CASE.

5. THE FRENCHMAN HEADING THE GOF'S PAYMASTER'S OFFICE IN SAIGON UNTIL IT CLOSED AT THE END OF MARCH ALSO DEPARTED ON THE APR 21 FLIGHT. HE OBSERVED THAT, WHEREAS THE WORD CONTINUES TO BE RECEIVED FROM HANOI THAT THE SRV HAS LIBERATED ITS POLICY AS REGARDS FRENCH/VIETNAMESE DEPARTMENTAL

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TURES FOR FRANCE, IN REALITY THESE ARE MORE PETTY ADMINISTRATIVE HURDLES THAN EVER. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER HANOI AND SAIGON WERE SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE OR PLAYING A GAME OF THEIR OWN WITH FRANCE.

6. A MEMBER OF HIS STAFF REPORTED THAT THE FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL IN SAIGON RECENTLY TOLD HIS STAFF THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT WORK TO OCCUPY IT FOR ANOTHER YEAR. HE DID NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, HOW LONG THE CONGEN WOULD BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN SAIGON. WE PRESUME THAT THE FRENCH AND VIETNAMESE REACHED AGREEMENT ON THIS POINT DURING PRIMIN PHAM VAN DONG'S VISIT TO PARIS LAST WEEK.

7. MISS TRAN'S COMMENTS ON LIFE IN SAIGON FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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